

Faces of the Commons Europe Regional Report

Executive Summary

by Anna Mazgal

Subject matter

The objective of the research is to reinforce the Creative Commons strategic process with a landscape of CC affiliates, their motivations, needs and potentials. The idea is to understand what the affiliates from Europe bring into the network: who they are, what motivates them to be part of it and what challenges they face. It is also important to understand how the network can help them to make their groundwork easier. It is also verified what sense of collective identity the affiliates have and what they perceive as greatest accomplishments of the global movement.

Methods of Analysis

The research is based on in-depth interviews (individual or group) with representatives of 3 Creative Commons Affiliates in Europe: Italy, Portugal, and Poland. During the research, the Creative Commons Europe meeting took place and it was an occasion to deepen some of the insights emerging from the interviews. Additional interviews were carried out with interviewees from France, Greece, and UK.

Criteria for choosing the affiliates to be interviewed in a region:

- a) Geographic distribution
- b) Size and model of involvement
- c) Duration of involvement
- d) Diversity

Limitations

The research has been ridden with a few limitations that stemmed from tight timing and budgetary constraints. First, the findings needed to be collected in time to feed in the ongoing strategic process; otherwise the usefulness of the report would be mostly anecdotal. Since the funding came from Creative Commons and not from an external grant that was impossible to secure at such a short notice, most interviews were carried out long-distance and the possibilities of observing the affiliates and their work were limited.

Results

The interviewees are a group of individuals with strong internal motivations to follow the values they recognize and incorporate them in their everyday work. Their individual potential and abilities have an exponential influence of the course of interests and work they successfully undertake.

Their strengths are policy and advocacy work targeted at authorities as well as educational and cultural institutions, and resilience to crisis and a changing environment. At the same

time they experience difficulties in strategic structuring of their teams, recruiting new volunteers, and reaching out to communities they have little common expertise with.

Conclusions

The research showed that the CC community in Europe is reasonably well integrated. There are common overarching characteristics of the affiliates in the region that stem from external factors, such as the jurisdiction of the European Union, the relative small size of the region, or the fact that there is no predominant national language and therefore English is not only the most common but also uncontested “*lingua franca*” of the continent. It is a promising circumstance for creating new synergies and integrating the capacities to address the deficits the affiliates face.

Recommendations

To maximize the impact of their work, the affiliates need to invest time in designing basic growth strategies that encompass an analysis of the environment and resources available to respond to the challenges and opportunities. Next step should be assessing missing capacities/resources followed with a plan to supply them. The strategies should also include a more structured team development plan and envision processes of learning between affiliates of similar interest and/or matching expertise.

Recommendations for the network and HQ focus on creating an environment where there are mechanisms of a targeted assistance that does not thwart the affiliates' independence and resourcefulness. Creative Commons network should present its accomplishments through stories of the affiliates. To support the emergence of new capacities and boost networking, the HQ can identify hubs of competence - affiliates that have strong and documented experience in any relevant area. Training and mentoring could be provided in developing better communication, especially directed to the audiences that the affiliates find important. The regional coordinator could identify new funding streams and help organize both the required consortium of affiliates and the grant writing process.

To provide conceptual and expert assistance, the network should continue its support and involvement in COMMUNIA, one of the leading advocates for user rights in the copyright debate. The HQ should also support the European affiliates in their advocacy on the national level. At the same time the organization could explore possibilities of a greater institutional presence in the EU, through both position papers and direct involvement of the personnel.

The global network is in a position to open up an affiliate-driven debate on exploring new ideas, changes in technology and in the environment. Creative Commons should also reclaim the concept of sharing, somewhat compromised by the elusive promise of the *sharing economy*. Reinventing it with examples of CC-based projects and affiliates' would promote a value that is at the core of affiliates' integrity in a very constructive way.